**Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**U.S. History Course Syllabus**

**Washington Latin Public Charter School**

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All homework assignments found at: <http://wlpcsupperschool.wikispaces.com/Findler>

**Course Description**

*What is this class all about?* This course is designed to help students understand our nation’s history, analyze the complexity of its people and institutions, and critically evaluate the direction of the United States. History is not simply a list of events or people that are dead and gone – it is a way of thinking where one studies, writes about, and learns from the struggles of those who came before them. This is all done in the hopes of solving the complicated problems of today. The task of the historian is to turn dates, names, and places into answers to life’s toughest questions.

In order to begin to understand the challenges of the past so that we can better understand our future, this course has been designed around a series of questions. You may see them as “hooks” at the beginning of a unit, and as test and essay questions at the end of a unit. You will also see these questions presented as topics for Socratic Seminars (see below for details). Here’s a sample of questions we’ll try to answer this year.

* What is Progress?
* What does it mean to be an “American”?
* Do moral values change or stay the same over time?
* Does the American Dream really exist?
* What makes someone a hero? Who are our “national heroes”, and why?
* How do my answers to these questions shape my life?

Now on to the details…

**Assessment**

*How will I be graded?* There will be multiple ways for students to show that they are learning in this class:

* **Homework** – Students will be given homework on a regular basis. Students are asked to take pride in their work, and will be asked to re-do assignments that do not follow this standard. There will be no late work accepted in this class (please see the homework policy in the school handbook)
* **Tests and Quizzes –** Students will be given tests and quizzes on a regular basis. These will be designed to gauge how well a student understands information, and will be based in most cases on notes, homework assignments, discussions, and in class readings.
* **Projects –** Students will also be given a chance to demonstrate their learning through multi-media projects such as video, photography, and visual arts. All projects will be accompanied with ample time to complete and a full description of expectations. Projects are often accompanied by oral presentations and some form of writing.
* **Essays/Other Writing Assignments** – There will be a special emphasis in this class on writing. While separate stand-alone essay assignments won’t be the main source of assessment, nearly every assignment you have will involve some type of writing. Tests, quizzes, projects, and seminars will all have some writing component. Why? Because writing is a skill that every employer looks for.
* **Socratic Seminars –** Students will engage in Socratic Seminars on a regular basis. These graded discussions are primarily student-led, and are centered upon a central question or topic that is related to a given unit of study. Seminars are graded in three ways: writing done in preparation for the seminar, participating during the seminar, and writing that reflects on what was accomplished.
* **Participation –** All students are expected to participate in class on a regular basis. While participation does refer to speaking out loud, it also includes being on time, prepared for class, and engaged with material at hand. The day’s warm-up will be included in the participation grade.

The percentage breakdown of these assignments is:

Tests/Quizzes: 30%; Projects/Papers: 35%; Homework: 20%; Participation 15%

**Daily Life in History Class**

* *What should I bring?*  Bring paper and pencil to class, and keep good track of your 3-2-1 sheets.
* *What about being late?* All students are required to be in class on time, ready to work. If you are going to be late to class, you will only be excused with a pass from another teacher.
* *Is there a warm-up/do now?* Yes. Each day, students will analyze a new primary source document following a 3-2-1 Observe-Reflect-Question process (more on that on the next page)
* *Absences:* If you miss a class period, ask about what you missed. I will not seek you out to make sure you make up your work. Please watch the board for make-up due dates if you are absent on the day of a test or quiz.
* *What if I need help?* You can ask me after class/at lunch, sign up for tutorial, or simply send an email. I am happy to help everyone, but it’s hard to help if you don’t ask.

**Policies:**

*What are the basic rules?*

* Be yourself.
* Respect others.
* Do the right thing.

**Skills**

*How will I benefit once this class is over?* Over the course of the year, we will work on different skills. This is separate from knowledge, things that can be learned about and memorized. Skills are different in that you will be asked to *show* you that you can do something. All of the skills that are worked on in this class are 21st century skills, transferrable to any work environment.

* **Listening –** How well do you listen to your classmates in discussions? Are you responding to what they have said and moving the conversation forward, or are you talking simply to be heard? Are you able to work well with others? (Socratic Seminars, presentations, class discussion)
* **Reflecting –** How well do you reflect on a conversation, class period, discussion, test, or assignment? Are you thinking about what your role in the process was? Are you thinking about the process of learning, and how you can improve it? (Written assignments, tests)
* **Primary Source Analysis –** In History, a Primary Source is one that was created during the time period you are studying. Letters, journals, or pictures from history are common Primary Sources, but truly any object could be one. Every day, a new primary source will be displayed as a catalyst for the day’s discussion. Here’s one of my favorites and one that you might see again this year:



Please sign below and return no later than **tomorrow.**

*I have read and understand the course syllabus and expectations for US History.*

**Parent/Guardian \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Student \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**